

## Meeting Notes

**Meeting Date/Time :** January 21, 2003; 1:00 pm

**Location:** EPA Region 4

**Purpose:** Project Planning for Florida Phosphate Mining Area Initiative

**Attendees:** EPA: Brad Jackson (RPM) Rob Stern (WAM and PO), Charles Hayes (CO),  
EPA RAC Contractor (Black & Veatch): Harvey Coppage, Mary Wenska, Mentor/Protege (Khafra): Suzanne Zoda

Brad Jackson called the meeting to discuss a scope of work and potential budget needs for providing community involvement support for a new Region 4 initiative to address the Central Florida Phosphate Mining Area. EPA issued an initial work order to Black & Veatch under the Multi-Site Community Relations Work Assignment to begin project planning and preparation of a scope of work and budget.

Brad Jackson provided an overview of the project and EPA's reasons for launching the initiative. He explained that phosphate mining area comprises approximately 21 sites previously identified on the CERCLIS inventory. Sites fall into two categories: phosphate waste disposal sites or mined areas closed since 1975, when the State of Florida established mandatory closure requirements, and areas of generally older mines or disposal sites on "non-mandatory lands," not subject to State closure requirements. The latter areas comprise approximately 150,000 acres, of which an estimated 25,000 acres have been redeveloped for residential use. Acreage and locations are subject to revision to include other uses, such as parks, schools, churches, etc. The redeveloped areas will be EPA's first priority within the phosphate mining initiative.

With one exception, the areas included in the initiative have not been investigated or scored for potential inclusion on the NPL. As a result, EPA will pursue an innovative approach to assess the problem and identify future actions. EPA is primarily concerned with the potential presence of radioactive substances, such as radium 226, gamma radiation, and radon, which may remain from earlier mining, processing, or disposal activities.

EPA recognizes the importance of planning and implementing an effective community relations effort that will anticipate and respond sensitively to issues and concerns at the start of, and throughout, the phosphate initiative. Brad Jackson said that EPA's initial technical activity will be an aerial survey of the redeveloped land areas to detect how much, if any, radiation is present. Meeting participants discussed potential community concerns about radiation issues, particularly in residential areas where community members may be unaware of previous phosphate mining activities. In addition, community opposition to proposed new mining operations has surfaced due to concerns that include environmental and health



risks. Although the EPA initiative will not address proposed new mining locations, groups and local officials have become sensitized to phosphate mining issues, which may increase scrutiny and raise questions about EPA's initiative.

EPA has requested Black & Veatch's assistance in researching, planning, developing, and implementing a community involvement approach that will be comprehensive and responsive to the highly sensitive nature of the EPA initiative. As discussed among the meeting participants, the ultimate scope cannot yet be determined for either the technical or community involvement aspects of the project.

Participants decided that as the next step in the community outreach planning process, Black & Veatch will develop an interim work plan and budget to include the following activities:

- Black & Veatch will compile information on effective community involvement and risk communication techniques used by other EPA Regions in managing mining site issues. Brad Jackson will assist in identifying EPA personnel with experience and precedent in mining site issues, particularly in Regions 8 and 10. Black & Veatch will compile applicable approaches, glossary of terms, and risk communication references.
- As soon as possible in February, EPA and Black & Veatch will hold a brainstorming and scoping session to identify all relevant approaches used at other sites and extract key elements that could be applied in central Florida. Brad Jackson will coordinate participation of Region 4 team members, including representatives from Public Affairs, Congressional Liaison office, the Ombudsman office and the Community Involvement branch, as well as participants from other Regions with specific expertise and experience with similar mining issues. EPA will also procure an outside meeting location; Black & Veatch will procure a meeting facilitator and prepare a meeting agenda.
- Before the brainstorming and scoping meeting, Black & Veatch will develop a draft outline of a community outreach strategy to use at the meeting as a basis for discussion among the participants. The outcome of the meeting will be to produce a final community outreach strategy as a basis for initial public contact and communication activities before and during EPA's aerial radiation survey. This strategy will also provide a foundation for development of a future comprehensive community involvement plan (CIP) for the Central Florida Phosphate Mining Initiative.
- Black & Veatch will compile an initial contact list of local officials; news media; community, civic, and environmental interest groups within the focus area.
- Black & Veatch will prepare a draft crisis communication plan for discussion at the brainstorming session. This plan will be used in the event of unexpected disclosures about EPA's phosphate initiative that could spark community concerns, or misinformation that needs to be immediately corrected. A draft press release (or standby statement) will be prepared to

respond to media inquiries before EPA's planned entry in the community.

- B&V will draft an information sheet to explain EPA's initiative and first steps. The sheet will be written in straightforward, non-technical language to explain that the aerial survey is a means of checking to see what, if any radiation, is present. The information sheet will explain that EPA is seeking input to shape its approach to the phosphate and to develop a process and criteria for addressing the phosphate areas.

Meeting participants discussed, in general terms, how to initiate contact with the community. It was thought that the initial message to community members about the radiation surveying should be "just checking." However, no plans were made for the initial outreach approach. That approach will come out of discussions at the brainstorming and scoping session planned for some time in February. Black & Veatch will submit a variance later in February to cover costs for implementing the initial outreach approach.

Also, the interim work plan will not include costs for development of a full CIP. However, information and understanding of the situation gleaned from the foregoing activities will provide a basis for scoping and budgeting to conduct community interviews and develop the CIP.

Brad Jackson offered to provide Black & Veatch with background information on the initiative and other related mining activities, some of which Black & Veatch took after the meeting for copying and return to EPA.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 pm.